



April 2005

NPS Presents Deed for Third Largest Regional Park in Tennessee

Community celebrates long-awaited acquisition of close-to-home natural area



Photo courtesy Bill Huie

Chattanooga, TN (March 31, 2005) – It took over six years for the U.S. Army and the General Services Administration to complete their review and assign 2,800 undeveloped acres at the former Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant to the National Park Service (NPS), but this property has now been conveyed, all at no cost, jointly to the city of Chattanooga and Hamilton County. Wallace Brittain, Chief, NPS Recreation and Conservation Division, presented the deed to the Hon. Bob Corker, Mayor of Chattanooga and the Hon. Claude Ramsey, Mayor of Hamilton County, during their transfer ceremony. Brittain stated, “The NPS Federal Lands to Parks (FLP) Program helps to provide better recreation opportunities and create stronger communities... It is now your park forever.” Mayor Ramsey commented, “It will give families the opportunity to play, explore, and learn together in a natural environment that’s just a few minutes drive from home.” Speaking at the ceremony Mayor Corker declared, “Our community is grateful for the efforts of the NPS...Our city is known internationally for its tremendous outdoor amenities and this park provides us with another outstanding asset...” The transfer was negotiated by FLP staff. For more information, please contact, Bill Huie, FLP Program Manager, at bill_huie@nps.gov or 404-562-3175.

Cheat Canyon Land Swap

Paddlers protect access to the Cheat and Big Sandy Rivers

Albright, Preston County, WV (March 2005) - A land swap creating 14 acres of river-front public access for paddlers was achieved after over a year of negotiations. Allegheny Wood Products (AWP) exchanged lands with owners of Mountain Streams & Trails (MS&T) outfitters, which provided MS&T legal ownership to the take-out in the 10-mile Class V Cheat Canyon, from Albright to the Jenkinsburg Bridge and at the same site, a take-out for paddlers on the Big Sandy. For their part of the swap, AWP received ownership to the upstream end of their haul road.

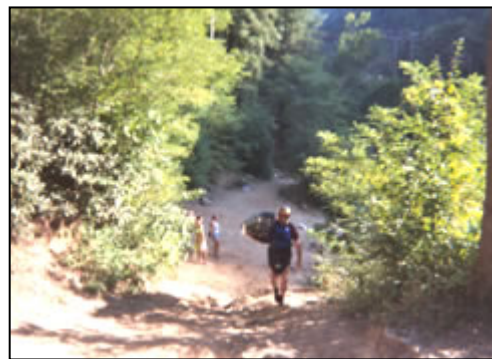


Photo courtesy Peggy Pings

From 2003-2004, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program assisted with Cheat Canyon Coalition organizational and strategic planning efforts to identify land use and management needs, create public awareness activities, and work to acquire a 5,600 acres from Allegheny Power (AP) (subsequently, AP sold the 5,600 acres to AWP in 2003). For over 50 years, the property has not been actively managed, and it has become a community playground with detrimental environmental effects. The current partners hope to make this a case study in how commercial groups, private paddlers, and state agencies can work together to turn an eyesore into a source of pride for everyone. Friends of the

Cheat will likely assume long-term responsibility for maintaining the site, with a \$50K initial fundraising goal, the DEP is looking at erosion problems, and the DNR is considering fishing access for the site. American Whitewater is now working with MS&T to create an access agreement, and has created a Cheat River Fund to accept donations to improve the parking for paddlers. For more information, please contact Peggy Pings, Outdoor Recreation Planner, NPS RTCA, at mpings@wvu.edu or 304-293-2941 x2446.

A Haven for Wildlife and People

Black Rock Sanctuary



Photos courtesy Michael Louie

Chester County, PA (April, 2005) - A new chapter in the development of Black Rock Sanctuary began in April with a \$195,000 grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The 119-acre Sanctuary contains wetlands, woodlands, and meadows that offer a wonderful opportunity to relax and discover the history, geology, wildlife, plant life, and habitats of this desilting basin along the Schuylkill River. After years of industrial use and abandonment, Chester County acquired the Black Rock basin from the PA Department of Environmental Protection for conservation and recreation purposes. Taking advantage of the location along the Atlantic Coast Flyway, Chester County envisioned an “outdoor classroom” to educate and support breeding and nesting habitat for migrating waterfowl.

The National Park Service, together with the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the William Penn Foundation, and Chester County, worked together on this project to construct additional interpretive stations, improve trail and parking surfaces, and restore traditional landscaping. Recognizing the many partners involved in re-creating the Sanctuary, Congressman Jim Gerlach acknowledged the positive changes at a dedication ceremony, “Good things happen when people get together...this LWCF grant is for environmental revitalization. Creation of the Black Rock Sanctuary will allow the County to maintain the habitat of the basin and provide recreation opportunities for the public.” For more information, please contact Mary Vavra, at mary_vavra@nps.gov or 215-597-9175.

U.S. Steel donates for large urban park and trail system

1,108 acres on Red Mountain

Birmingham, AL (January 2005)- In the largest donation in the company's history, U.S. Steel Corporation has agreed to give \$1 million cash and sell land along Red Mountain (at a \$9.5 million discount) to help create one of the nation's largest urban park and trails system. A ridgetop portion of the land is to remain natural but will include trails. The proposed park would surpass in size some of the nation's best known large urban parks, including New York's Central Park and San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. The 1,108-acre tract will attract athletes, hikers, bird-watchers, and cyclists alike. Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) staff were instrumental in developing a steering committee to support a proposed trail (within the park), the 3D-Mining Camp and Nature Trail @11 Mining Camp. RTCA assisted the 3D-Mining Camp and

Nature Trail Steering Committee with community workshops and creating informational brochures and fact sheets. RTCA was involved in the development of partnerships which include the Alabama Greenway Commission, the Regional Planning Commission, and the Black Warrior-Cahaba Rivers Land Trust. For more information call Stacye N. Palmer, Outdoor Recreation Planner, at stacye_palmer@nps.gov or 504-589-3882 x 140.

Partners in Land Conservation

Protecting a network of natural, cultural, and recreational resources

Ashburnham, MA (April 2005) - One of the largest remaining tracts of undeveloped land in the Town of Ashburnham will be protected with assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program. The \$450,000 LWCF share, combined with state and local money, will make this \$1,125,000, 387-acre tract available for public recreation. An additional 72 acres contiguous with the LWCF-assisted acquisition will be given to the Town by the East West Foundation, owners of the property, protecting a total of 459 acres. A conservation restriction on the entire property will be conveyed to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to assure protection in perpetuity. In keeping with the spirit of conservation, two private land owners adjacent to the acquired property have committed to donating conservation restrictions on portions of their land, adding another 150 acres of preserved open space.



Photos courtesy Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Public access for passive recreation, linkages of existing conservation lands, maintenance of a viable, unfragmented wildlife corridor, protection of archaeologically sensitive sites (including a site once used by the "Harvard Shakers"), and buffering the effects future development may have on the Millers River are all benefits of acquiring this property. The success of this acquisition was a direct result of cooperation among federal, state, local, private and non-profit organizations, and private landowners. This partnership approach protected land for future generations to enjoy. For more information, please contact Mary Vavra at mary_vavra@nps.gov or 215-597-9175.

Conservation Successes informs Department of Interior staff, conservation partners, and friends about the program successes of the National Center for Recreation and Conservation. For more details, please contact the staff person involved with each project.

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